



MEMPHIS AND SHELBY COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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DR. WILLIE W. HERENTON
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SHELBY COUNTY
MAYOR

Monday, October 11, 2004

To All Area Pharmacies:

As you already know this country is facing a severe shortage of the flu vaccine this year and our community is no exception. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued guidelines for priority groups to receive the inactivated influenza vaccine. The following are considered priority groups to receive the influenza vaccine. Persons in the priority groups are considered to be at highest risk of developing serious complications from the flu. Each group is considered to have equal priority.

- Children age 6-23 months old;
- Persons aged > 65 years of age;
- Persons aged 2-64 years with underlying chronic medical conditions of the lungs or heart including asthma and individuals with chronic metabolic diseases (such as diabetes), renal problems, hemoglobinopathies or with suppressed immune systems;
- Residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities;
- Children and adolescents (age 6 months –18 years) who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy;
- Women who will be pregnant during the flu season;
- Health-care workers involved in direct patient care; and
- Out-of-home caregivers and household contacts of children aged <6 months.

We realize that you are being asked to make some hard decisions regarding your clients. However, your cooperation in adhering to the above guidelines is of prime importance to ensure the protection of the most vulnerable members of our community. If you encounter customers who do not fall into the high priority groups, you are encouraged to help them understand the seriousness of the vaccine shortage problem and ask that they forego or defer vaccination. If they are generally healthy and between the ages of 5 – 49 you may also encourage them to seek the intranasal vaccine from their health-care provider.

We would also ask that you remind all clients to practice good respiratory etiquette and good hand hygiene. Attached is a copy of a handout that you may duplicate and provide your clients regarding good public health measures.

The most up-to-date information regarding the availability of the influenza vaccine and the current recommendations for usage may be found on the CDC website: www.cdc.gov/flu.

Your cooperation regarding this serious public health issue is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions, you may contact the Health Department's Immunization Program at 544-7708 or the Epidemiology Section at 544-7717.

Sincerely,

Helen G. Morrow, M.D., M.P.A.
Acting Health Officer

Attachments: 2 flyers (Cover Your Cough, Stop The Spread of Germs)

Mission

To promote, protect and improve the health and environment of all Shelby County residents.

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